



Office of
Environment
& Heritage

Our reference: DOC15/54019

Mr Troy Green
General Manager
Tweed Shire Council
PO Box 816
MURWILLUMBAH NSW 2484

Dear Mr Green

The Minister for Environment, Rob Stokes MP, has received a number of letters expressing concern for the management of koalas in the area of Black Rock Sports Field, Pottsville and specifically the intention of Tweed Shire Council to remove the koala proof gate at the entrance to the sports field and replace it with a koala grid.

The koala population in the area of Black Rock Sports Field is included in the NSW Scientific Committee's preliminary determination to list koalas in the Tweed Local Government Area, east of the Pacific Highway as an endangered population.

I am advised that Tweed Shire Council installed a koala proof gate at the entrance to Black Rock Sports Field in August 2014 based on the recommendations of Council's Tweed Coast Koala Advisory Committee. I note that at the Council meeting on 22 January 2015 a motion was passed to replace the gate with a koala grid. I understand the motion also required the commissioning of a study of the koala numbers in the local precinct and preparation of a report to address 'hooning' behaviour on the sports ground entrance road.

While the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) would applaud Council for undertaking a study of the koala numbers at Black Rock it is concerned that the gate may be removed and replaced by a grid prior to finalising the outcomes of the study, thereby potentially placing the local koala population under further threat. I respectfully request Council to reconsider the motion to replace the existing gates at the entrance to the sporting field and not make any changes until the koala study is completed. This will allow more detailed information to be available regarding koalas, their habitat usage and the threats operating in the surrounding area to ensure that any decision regarding the sports field access and use is based on accurate and up to date ecological data. OEH is happy to provide expert technical advice and support in undertaking the study.

Please note the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* contain intervention provisions which may be exercised if in the opinion of OEH there is any action proposed which is likely to result in harm to a threatened species, population or ecological community.

Should you wish to discuss this matter in further detail please contact Mr Don Arnold, Regional Manager, North East Region, OEH on 6659 8232 or by email at don.arnold@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely


TERRY BAILEY
Chief Executive
19 February 2015